

Annunzio opposes plan for a \$1 coin

By Roger Boye

An influential congressman has criticized a proposal calling for new \$1 coins to replace \$1 bills.

"The Susan B. Anthony dollar was a flop; there's just no public sentiment for another new dollar coin at this time," said Rep. Frank Annunzio [D-Ill.], chairman of the House Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage.

Legislation introduced in both houses of Congress would force Treasury officials to mint a mostly copper dollar slightly larger than a quarter. The coin would have smooth edges and a dark yellow color so that consumers could quickly identify it.

Proponents suggest that taxpayers would save at least \$100 million a year in the cost of making money because the coin would last in circulation for 20 years while an average paper dollar wears out in 18 months. The House bill would halt production of \$1 bills several months after a "hard dollar" first entered circulation.

But Annunzio maintains that a dollar coin would be shunned.

"The minute people find out they have to change the dollar bill for a coin they'll go crazy because they don't want to carry coins. That's the reason credit cards are so popular; people don't want even to carry money, let alone coins," he said.

Neither the House subcommittee nor the Senate banking committee has scheduled a meeting to discuss a new dollar coin. Annunzio said the subcommittee might consider holding a hearing next year "if there's pressure [for a coin] from the public." A spokeswoman for the Senate committee said the proposal needs more staff study and that no hearings would be held before 1988, if then.

The legislation was introduced in Congress just weeks after Canada unveiled a new 11-sided dollar that could become a mainstay of the country's monetary system. Canada plans to phase out paper dollars by late 1989.

Earlier this decade, Great Britain replaced its one-pound note with a one-pound coin.